

Down the Road

Regional Haze

The Air Pollution Control Program is a founding member of the Central States Regional Air Planning Association (CENRAP), an organization of states, tribes and federal agencies. CENRAP is one of the five Regional Planning Organizations across the U.S. and includes the states and tribal areas of Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana. The organization was chartered to start and bring together activities associated with the management of regional haze and other air quality transport issues involving the central states.

The states and tribes in this region formed this association in response to federal Clean Air Act requirements to improve the visibility in Class I Wilderness Areas. Class I areas are areas of special national or regional natural, scenic, recreational, or historic value for which the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977 afford the highest level of protection from air pollutants. Two are located in Missouri; Mingo Wilderness Area (~8,000 acres) about 20 miles southwest of Poplar Bluff and Hercules Glade Wilderness Area (~12,300 acres) about 35 miles southeast of Springfield.

A variety of air pollutants contribute to visibility impairment. Most of the impairment is caused by small particles in the atmosphere. Some of the fine particles are released directly, and some of the particles are formed in the atmosphere as the product of chemical reactions. Sources of haze-causing pollution include electric power generation, industry, automobiles and trucks, agricultural

and forestry burning and many others. In Missouri, sulfate, a by-product of fossil fuel combustion, is likely to be a dominant source of visibility impairment.

These small particles, and their gaseous precursors, can be transported great distances affecting visibility over hundreds of miles. Because of this, visibility impairment does not respect state boundaries, and is a regional problem. EPA recognized this by encouraging states to form regional planning organizations.

The primary role of CENRAP is to coordinate the science and technology decisions that will be needed to support air quality management decisions. CENRAP functions through organized workgroups comprised of members from the states and tribes along with representatives of federal agencies, stakeholders and other interested parties. The Department is actively participating in the Emission Inventory, Modeling and Implementation and Control Strategies workgroups. Other workgroups include Monitoring, Communications and International Issues.

Although department staff will participate in these regional planning efforts, the final decisions regarding the management of air quality in Missouri will continue to be made within the state. Good visibility in Missouri's natural areas is valued by our citizens, and is an important element of people's experience when visiting these places. Through participation in CENRAP the department's Air Pollution Control Program hopes to address these issues and will strive to develop effective measures to improve visibility.



Hercules Glade Wilderness Area . Photographs provided by David A. Castillon, Ph.D., Geomorphologist.